ASDA

CREATIVE COOKERY

Chocolates

· SWEETS AND TREATS FOR ALL THE FAMILY ·

VALERIE EAMES

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CHOCOLATES

VALERIE EAMES

INTRODUCTION

Smooth, rich and versatile, chocolate is the ultimate sweet temptation. Combinations of dark and bitter, light and sweet with numerous fruits, nuts and flavourings added, ensure a favourite chocolate for every taste. Try some of the following recipes to see just how delicious and adaptable chocolate can be.

Chocolate through the centuries

Chocolate has been around for a long time, although not quite as we know it. Cocoa beans, from which chocolate is made, were in fact first used by the Aztecs, but in a slightly less delicious form. They valued the cocoa bean highly, and consumed it roasted and ground with water or wine for religious purposes. They even used the beans as a form of currency.

The first European to see the cocoa bean growing was Columbus on his voyage to the New World. He brought the idea of the Aztec's frothy drink back with him, but it was rather unpalatable to European tastes, and little interest was shown. Soon after this, the Spanish explorer, Cortez, tasted the drink in Mexico, and again brought the idea back with him. This time sugar and vanilla were added to the drink, which made it much more popular, but the recipe was kept a secret by the Spanish court for nearly 100 years.

Eventually the cocoa bean drink spread through Europe, and by the middle of the 17th Century chocolate houses were opening up in England to sell the drink, changed yet again with the addition of milk. Chocolate in this form, however, was still only tasted by a select few, as it was an expensive luxury.

In the early 19th century a Dutchman, Van Houten, made a great step forward, by inventing a press to extract fat from the bean, leaving a soluble powder, and 20 years later Joseph Fry became the first Englishman to manufacture an actual eating chocolate on a large scale.

Milk chocolate was still not made until the end of the last century, but by then it was very much in the form that we know so well today.

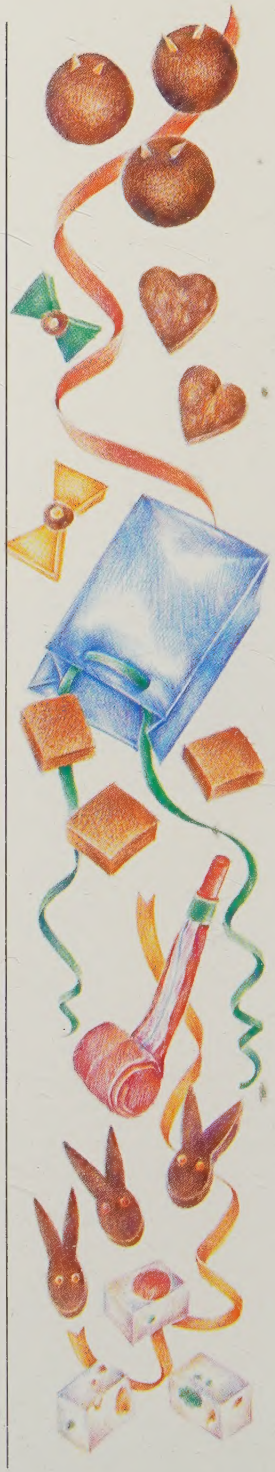
From beans to bars

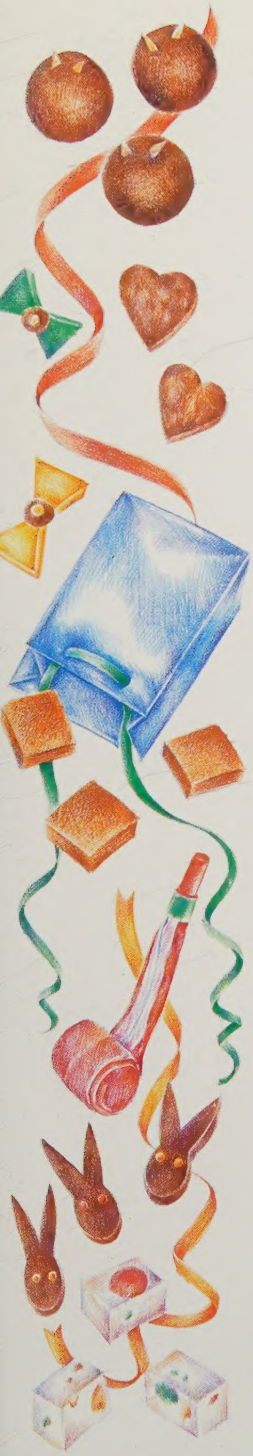
Cocoa beans come from the fruit of the Theobroma Cacao tree, which mainly grows in Central and South America, and West Africa. It takes one year's crop from one of these trees to make only 450g/1lb of refined cocoa powder.

The beans and pulp are taken from the fruit and left to ferment and dry, before cleaning, sorting and blending. The beans are roasted and start to smell much like chocolate; they are then shelled and ground to a thick paste, which is the basis of all chocolate products.

Chocolate liquor can be used in a number of ways:

- If the fat or cocoa butter is removed the liquor darkens and loses its sweetness, making cocoa powder.
- Sugar and extra cocoa butter can be added to make plain dessert chocolate. The more sugar there is the less bitter the chocolate will be.
- Milk and sugar is added for the sweeter milk chocolate.





Equipment for home-made chocolates

Many of the sweets in this book can be made with a few basic kitchen utensils. However, it is worth investing in some of the following if you intend to make sweets regularly.

FOR SUGAR BOILING: Strong, thick-based saucepans made from stainless steel, aluminium, cast-iron or copper.
A sugar thermometer; one with a clip will leave both hands free.

FOR DIPPING: Ordinary forks can be used, but chocolate dipping forks can also be used for making patterns on chocolates.

FOR CUTTING: Metal cutters in a variety of shapes and sizes.

FOR MOULDING: Plastic moulds are cheaper than metal, again they come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

FOR FONDANT: A marble slab or heatproof laminated surface is preferable, but a large baking sheet could be used instead.

Wrapping & packing

It is worth taking care when packing your chocolates, whether you intend to give them as gifts, or keep them yourself. Individual sweets can be wrapped in coloured cellophane or metallic papers. If they are firm enough, pack them in glass jars or small baskets.

Delicate chocolates are best packed in fairly shallow boxes or containers, with waxed paper between layers. Special boxes can be bought, but you can easily cover old boxes with wrapping paper or fabric.

Try making little stockings or crackers to fill and hang on the Christmas tree, or use empty egg boxes or paper cones to fill with small home-made Easter eggs.

Wholefood Shop, page 52

1
CRUNCHY & CHEWY

Many types of sweets can be topped or coated with chocolates, so here are a few basic recipes to start you on your way. Some of the recipes also form the basis of other chocolates throughout the book. Whether your preference is for the soft centre or the crisp and crunchy, you should find plenty to please everyone.

Fudge

PREPARATION TIME: *5 minutes*

Makes 550g/1¼lb

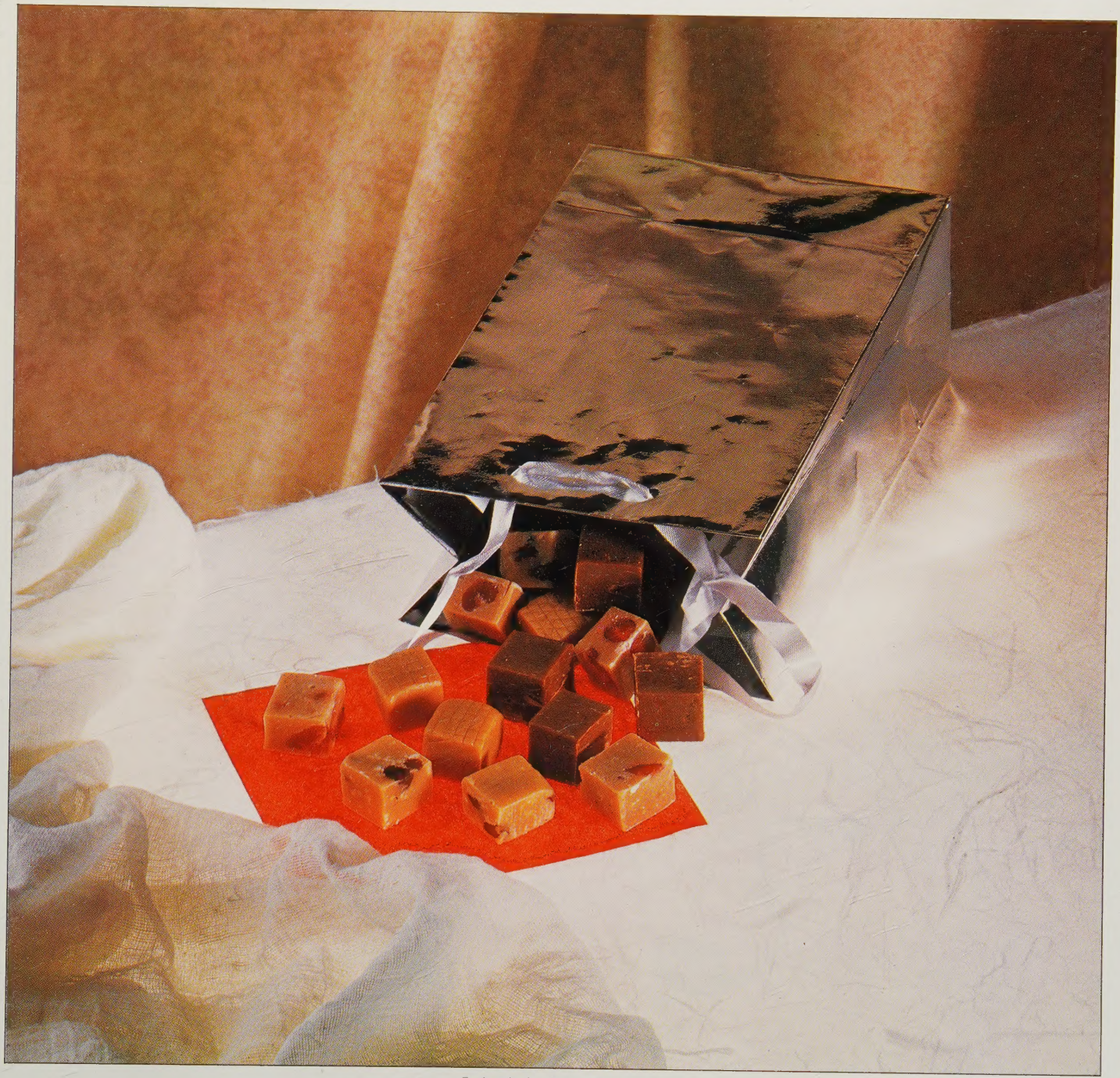
450g/1lb granulated sugar

150ml/¼ pint milk

150ml/¼ pint evaporated milk

50g/2oz unsalted butter, diced

1 Place all of the ingredients in a thick-based 1.7l/3 pint saucepan and heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved and the butter melted.
2 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the soft ball stage, 116°C/240°F, stirring occasionally to avoid sticking.
3 Remove immediately from the heat, place saucepan on a cold, heat-proof surface, and beat mixture with a wooden spoon until stiff.
4 Pour into an oiled 18cm/7in square shallow tin, and mark into squares or other shapes when starting to set.
5 Cut into pieces when cold.
6 Fudge can be flavoured in many different ways, from a few simple drops of vanilla essence, to more exotic raisins soaked in plenty of rum. Try adding other chopped, dried fruit, glâcé cherries or crystallized fruit, chopped stem ginger, nuts or coffee essence to your basic mixture. All of these can be added at step 3, before beating the mixture.



Fudge (selection of flavours)

Coconut Ice

PREPARATION TIME: *5 minutes*

Makes 550g/1¼lb

450g/1lb granulated sugar

150ml/¼ pint milk

150g/5oz desiccated coconut

food colouring (optional)

1 Place the sugar and milk in a large saucepan, and heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the soft ball stage, 116°C/240°F.
3 Remove immediately from the heat and stir in the coconut.
4 Add colouring if wished, and quickly pour the mixture into an oiled 20×15cm/8×6in shallow tin.
5 Leave to cool, and mark into squares or other shapes, when starting to set.
6 Leave to set completely, and then cut into bite-sized pieces.

HINTS AND TIPS

Both coconut ice and marzipan can be coloured with food colourings. Coconut ice is usually pink, or set with a white and a pink layer, but other colours could be used. Colour marzipan by adding a few drops while kneading in step 3. Different colours of marzipan could then be layered or rolled up together, and cut to make small sweets.

Marzipan

PREPARATION TIME: *10 minutes*

Makes 450g/1lb

225g/8oz ground almonds

100g/4oz caster sugar

100g/4oz icing sugar, sifted

1×5ml sp/1tsp lemon juice

1 egg, beaten

1 Mix together the ground almonds and sugars in a bowl.
2 Add the lemon juice and sufficient egg to bind the mixture.
3 Knead mixture lightly until smooth and use as required.

HINTS AND TIPS

Use marzipan for other sweets as a stoned date filling, to sandwich together walnut halves, or by adding chopped glâcé cherries to the dry mixture, binding and cutting into shapes.

Top left: *Coconut Ice.* ***Top right:*** *Cherry Marzipan.* ***Bottom:*** *Pink & White Marzipan.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Both types of fondant can be coloured and flavoured in a number of ways, and cut to make a variety of sweets or filled chocolates. Children can enjoy kneading flavours such as peppermint, coffee, melted chocolate, or rosewater into the Quick Uncooked Fondant with colourings, while you can perfect the boiled fondant. Use both types to wrap around crystallized fruits and nuts, or cut into shapes and coat with chocolate.

Fondant

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 350g/12oz

450g/1lb granulated sugar

150ml/¼ pint water

1×15ml sp/1tbsp liquid glucose (available from chemists)

1 Place all of the ingredients in a large saucepan, and heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the soft ball stage, 116°C/240°F.
3 Quickly pour the syrup onto a large marble slab or baking sheet sprinkled with cold water, and leave to cool for a few minutes before continuing.
4 Using a dampened metal palette knife, lift the edges of the syrup, folding into the centre, until the mixture is slightly viscous and yellow.
5 Using a dampened wooden spatula, work the mixture in a figure of eight movement for 5-10 minutes, until white and crumbly.
6 Knead the fondant with dampened hands for 5-10 minutes, until it is smooth and moist, scraping up any mixture that sticks to the surface.
7 Form the fondant into a ball, wrap loosely in a damp cloth, and leave in a cool place for 12 hours before using.

Quick Uncooked Fondant

PREPARATION TIME: *10 minutes*

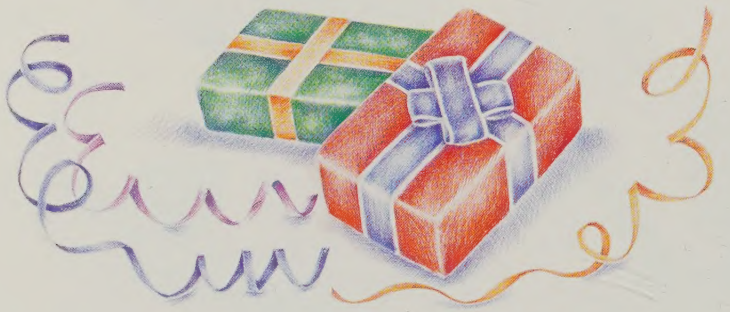
Makes 450g/1lb

1 egg white, lightly beaten

3×15ml sp/3tbsp liquid glucose

450g/1lb icing sugar, sifted, plus a little extra for kneading

1 Mix together the egg white and glucose, and gradually stir in the icing sugar.
2 Dust your hands with icing sugar, and knead the mixture well until smooth.
3 Use as required.



Top: *Fondant.* ***Bottom:*** *Quick Uncooked Fondant (two versions).*

HINTS AND TIPS

Sugar Syrups

The two sweets above are made from a sugar syrup. For a successful syrup it is important that the sugar has completely dissolved before boiling, and the syrup is not stirred during boiling, unless the recipe states otherwise. Without care, the sugar may start to crystallize. If this does happen, brush the crystals on the side of the pan with a brush dipped in hot water, to dissolve them.

Toffee

PREPARATION TIME: *5 minutes*

Makes 450g/1lb

400g/14oz granulated sugar
100g/4oz unsalted butter, diced
2×15ml sp/2tbsp white vinegar
2×15ml sp/2tbsp boiling water

1 Place all of the ingredients in a large saucepan, and heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved and the butter melted.
2 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the soft crack stage, 141°C/285°F.
3 Pour into an oiled 15cm/6in square shallow tin, and mark into squares or other shapes when starting to set.
4 Leave until cold, and break into pieces.

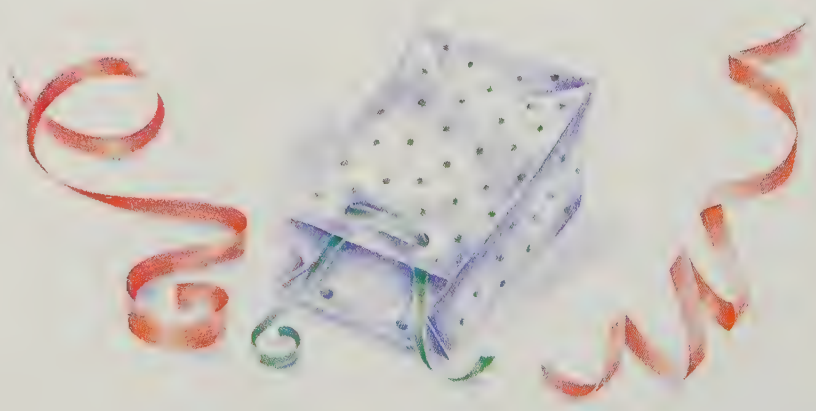
Cream Caramels

PREPARATION TIME: *5 minutes*

Makes 350g/12oz

225g/8oz light soft brown sugar
100ml/4fl oz single cream
75g/3oz unsalted butter, diced
1×15ml sp/1tbsp water

1 Place all of the ingredients in a large saucepan, and heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved and the butter melted.
2 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the hard ball stage, 130°C/250°F.
3 Pour into an oiled 15cm/6in square shallow tin, and mark into squares or other shapes when starting to set.
4 Leave until cold, and break into pieces.



Top: *Toffee (two flavours).*
Bottom: *Cream Caramels (wrapped).*

HINTS AND TIPS

Sugar Syrup Temperatures

The most accurate way of testing the temperature of a syrup is with a sugar thermometer. However all of these recipes also state the stage at which the syrup will be, at a given temperature. For example:

- *Soft ball: the syrup will form a ball that you can easily flatten between your fingers.*
- *Firm ball: the syrup should just hold its shape when dropped into cold water and removed.*
- *Hard ball: the syrup will hold its shape but be sticky.*
- *Soft crack: the syrup can be pulled into a thread.*
- *Hard crack: the syrup will be hard and brittle.*
- *Caramel: the syrup will be light golden in colour.*

Praline

PREPARATION TIME: *10 minutes*

Makes 450g/1lb

225g/8oz blanched almonds

225g/8oz granulated sugar

125ml/4fl oz water

1 Toast the almonds under a hot grill until lightly browned. Keep warm.
2 Place the sugar and water in a saucepan, and heat gently, stirring continuously until the sugar has dissolved.
3 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily until light golden in colour, at the caramel stage, 160°C/320°F.
4 Remove immediately from the heat, stir in the almonds, and quickly pour the praline onto a large oiled baking sheet.
5 Leave to set, and break into bite-sized pieces when cold.

Butterscotch

PREPARATION TIME: *5 minutes*

Makes 450g/1lb

450g/1lb demerara sugar

150ml/¼ pint water

50g/2oz unsalted butter, diced

1 Place the sugar and water in a large saucepan, and heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the soft crack stage, 141°C/280°F.
3 Remove immediately from the heat and stir in the butter, a little at a time, until completely melted.
4 Quickly pour the butterscotch into an oiled 15cm/6in square shallow tin.
5 Leave to cool, and mark into squares or other shapes, when starting to set.
6 Leave to set completely, and then break into bite-sized pieces.

Left: *Praline.*
Right: *Butterscotch.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Choosing Chocolate

All of the sweets in this chapter can be coated with chocolate. Choose a bitter dessert chocolate with the least amount of sugar for the strongest flavour and milk chocolate for a milder flavour. Professionals use a couverture chocolate which is less readily available, but gives a smooth, glossy finish. It is worth seeking out if you intend to make a lot of chocolates, but requires special heating before use.

Turkish Delight

PREPARATION TIME: *10 minutes*

Makes 700g/1½lb

¼×5ml sp/¼tsp tartaric acid
200g/7oz icing sugar, sifted
75g/3oz cornflour
50g/2oz clear honey
a few drops of triple strength rose water
red food colouring
TO COAT
175g/6oz icing sugar
1½×5ml sp/1½tsp bicarbonate of soda
¾×5ml sp/¾tsp citric acid

1 Place the granulated sugar in a saucepan with 150ml/¼pint water, and heat gently, stirring continuously until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the soft ball stage, 116°C/240°F. Add the tartaric acid and remove from the heat.
3 Place the icing sugar and cornflour in a saucepan, and blend in 700ml/1¼ pints water. Bring to the boil, stirring well until thick and syrupy.
4 Lower the heat and gradually beat in the sugar syrup. Bring to the boil, and boil steadily for 30 minutes, until very pale golden and transparent.
5 Beat in the honey and rose water, add a little colouring, and pour into an oiled 18cm/7in square tin. Leave to set.
6 Sift together the coating ingredients, cut the Turkish Delight into squares with a sharp knife dipped in icing sugar, and toss in the coating.

Nougat

PREPARATION TIME: *30 minutes*

Makes 500g/1¼lb

75g/3oz clear honey
350g/12oz granulated sugar
150ml/¼ pint water
50g/2oz liquid glucose
3 egg whites
225g/8oz mixed chopped glâcé cherries, angelica and almonds
2 sheets rice paper

1 Place the honey in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and leave to melt.
2 Place the sugar and water in a saucepan, and heat gently, stirring continuously until the sugar has dissolved.
3 Add the glucose, bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the soft crack stage 141°C/280°F.
4 Pour the honey into the sugar syrup, and continue boiling to 143°C/290°F.
5 Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl until very stiff, and gradually whisk in the hot syrup.
6 Place the bowl over a pan of hot water, and whisk until the mixture is very thick and firm.
7 Remove the bowl from the pan, stir in the fruit and nuts, and turn into an 18cm/7in square tin lined with rice paper.
8 Cover the nougat with more rice paper, place a thick piece of card on top, and weight down overnight.
9 Turn out and cut into squares or any other bite-sized shapes.

Top left: *Turkish Delight.*
Bottom right: *Nougat.*

2
CHILDREN'S TREATS

Children will love helping to make and eat these sweets and chocolates. Do not leave them to chop or melt ingredients unattended, although most ages could manage the mixing and kneading. Hopefully you will get just as much enjoyment as they will from the next few pages.

Bow Ties

PREPARATION TIME: *45 minutes*

Makes 14

50g/2oz plain chocolate, chopped
15g/½oz unsalted butter
1×5ml sp/1tsp golden syrup
15g/½oz Rice Snaps, finely crushed
225g/8oz marzipan (recipe on page 8)
food colourings
icing sugar for rolling out
14 sugar flowers

1 Place the chocolate, butter and syrup in a small saucepan, and heat very gently until melted.
2 Remove pan from heat and thoroughly mix in Rice Snaps.
3 Turn mixture into a bowl, and refrigerate until firm enough to handle.
4 Meanwhile, divide up the marzipan, add a few drops of colouring to each portion, and gently knead in, making as many different colours as you wish.
5 Sprinkle the surface with icing sugar, and roll out one colour at a time, about 0.6cm/¼in thick.
6 Cut out bow ties about 5cm/2in thick.
7 Mould the Rice Snaps mixture into small balls, shape around the centre of each bow tie, and top with sugar flowers.
8 Leave for several hours until firm.

Bow Ties

HINTS AND TIPS

Extra Advice

- *Any ingredients that need crushing are quickly ground in a blender or food processor. They can also be crushed by placing in a strong plastic bag, securing the end and beating with a rolling pin..*

Rocky Road Lollipops

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 10

100g/4oz milk chocolate, chopped

50g/2oz unsalted butter, diced

4 marshmallows

4 glâcé cherries

15g/½oz unsalted peanuts

75g/3oz icing sugar, sifted

25g/1oz sugar strands

10 lolly sticks

1 Place the chocolate and butter in a small saucepan, and heat very gently until melted. Turn into a bowl.
2 Chop the marshmallows, cherries and peanuts very finely, and stir into the chocolate and butter with the icing sugar.
3 Leave until firm enough to handle if necessary, then shape into 10 balls.
4 Roll balls in sugar strands, and press onto sticks.

Peanut Butter Cornets

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 8

8 sugar ice-cream cones

100g/4oz milk chocolate, chopped

4×15ml sp/4tbsp crunchy peanut butter

15g/½oz unsalted peanuts, finely chopped and toasted

1 Slice about 2.5cm/1in off the top of each cone, and crush well.
2 Place the chocolate and peanut butter in a small saucepan, and heat very gently until melted. Stir in the crushed cone tops.
3 Pour or spoon the mixture into the cones, sprinkle with the chopped peanuts, and leave to set.

HINTS AND TIPS

Awkward shapes such as the cones right, can be left to set by standing in a deep bowl of dry rice.

Left: *Rocky Road Lollipops.*
Right: *Peanut Butter Cornets.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Flavourings & Colours
Both of these should be concentrated so that they do not affect the consistency of the ingredients to which they are being added.

Rainbow Twists

PREPARATION TIME: *40 minutes*

Makes 16

225g/8oz fondant (recipe on page 10)
food colourings, such as pink, yellow and green
a little sifted icing sugar for rolling
peppermint essence (optional)
25g/1oz milk chocolate, melted

1 Divide the fondant into three pieces, and add a few drops of colouring to each.
2 Dust your hands with icing sugar, and knead the fondant until evenly coloured. Add a little peppermint essence with a green colour if wished.
3 Roll each coloured portion with your hands into strands about 1cm/½in wide. Twist together and cut into 16 pieces.
4 Leave for several hours until firm, and dip each end in melted chocolate.

Footballs

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 10

50g/2oz plain chocolate, grated
50g/2oz white chocolate, grated
50g/2oz icing sugar, sifted
4×15ml sp/4tbsp condensed milk
15g/½oz desiccated coconut
food colourings such as pink, yellow or green

1 Mix together the chocolates and icing sugar, and stir in the condensed milk to bind the mixture.
2 Divide up the desiccated coconut, into as many portions as you have colours, add a few drops of colouring to each portion, and stir to blend in.
3 Mould the chocolate mixture into 10 balls, and roll in the coloured coconut until evenly coated.

HIN AN TIPS

Concentrated food colourings are available in a paste form, and although they are ideal for colouring sweets, they must be used with care as they are extremely strong.

Coconut Cups

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 12

3×15ml sp/3tbsp condensed milk
1×5ml sp/1tsp lemon juice
75g/3oz icing sugar, sifted
50g/2oz desiccated coconut
food colourings, such as pink, yellow or green
12 milk chocolate cups (see page 36)
TO DECORATE
crystallized fruit slices

1 Mix together the condensed milk and lemon juice, and gradually stir in the icing sugar and coconut.
2 Divide the mixture into portions, and stir a few drops of colouring into each. Spoon into the chocolate cups.
3 Decorate and leave for several hours until set.

Top: *Rainbow Twists.*
Bottom left: *Footballs.*
Bottom right: *Coconut Cups.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Melting Chocolate
Chocolate should be melted with care as overheating causes it to thicken and become dull, making it almost impossible to use. Only use direct heat if the chocolate is with another ingredient that heats or melts easily without burning, such as in the recipes above. To melt chocolate on its own, chop it and place in a bowl over a pan of hot water. The water should not be boiling, and the bowl should not touch the water, as this would cause the chocolate to overheat. Try adding a little cooking oil if the chocolate is too thick.

Fudgie Stars

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 20

50g/2oz plain chocolate, chopped
40g/1½oz unsalted butter, diced
2×15ml sp/2tbsp single cream
few drops of vanilla essence
225g/8oz icing sugar, sifted
2×5ml sp/2tsp sugar crystals or hundreds and thousands

1 Place the chocolate and butter in a small saucepan, and heat very gently, stirring until melted. Turn into a bowl.
2 Stir the cream and vanilla essence into the chocolate, and gradually add the icing sugar to the mixture.
3 Spoon the mixture into a lightly oiled tin, approximately 20×15cm/8×6in in size, sprinkle with the sugar crystals or hundreds and thousands, and press on lightly. Refrigerate for a few hours.
4 Cut out stars using a 4cm/1½in cutter, and either cut the scraps of mixture into shapes with a knife, or melt them gently and set again.

Mallow Moons

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 24

100g/4oz plain chocolate, chopped
50g/2oz unsalted butter, diced
100g/4oz pink and white marshmallows
2×5ml sp/2tsp single cream
1×15ml sp/1tbsp coloured dragées

1 Place the chocolate and butter in a small saucepan, and heat very gently, stirring until melted.
2 Gently melt the marshmallows with the cream in another small saucepan, and swirl the two mixtures together.
3 Pour the mixture into a small, lightly oiled tin, approximately 15×10cm/6×4in in size, sprinkle with dragées, and press on lightly.
4 Refrigerate for a few hours until firm, and cut out into moon shapes.

HINTS AND TIPS

Set other sweets on a baking sheet or board lined with non-stick baking parchment or waxed paper, to make them easy to remove.

Left: *Fudgie Stars.*
Right: *Mallow Moons.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Storing Chocolate

Bars of chocolate should be kept in a cool, dry, dark, place, and should be well wrapped, as they easily pick up other odours. Under the correct conditions plain chocolate will keep for up to one year, and milk chocolate for 6 months; after this they tend to lose their gloss. If chocolate becomes too warm, it develops a whitish bloom which does not affect the flavour, but will spoil the appearance.

Chocolate Crunch Animals

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 12

100g/4oz milk chocolate, chopped

15g/½oz unsalted butter

40g/1½oz praline, finely crushed (recipe on page 14)

TO DECORATE
small sweets

1 Place the chocolate and butter in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir gently until melted.
2 Remove bowl from pan, and stir in the crushed praline.
3 Pour the mixture into a shallow tin, approximately 15cm/6in square and lined with waxed paper, and leave to set.
4 When set, cut out animal shapes with cutters, melting the scraps and setting again if wished.

Buttons

PREPARATION TIME: *35 minutes*

Makes 30

50g/2oz ground almonds

25g/1oz caster sugar

25g/1oz icing sugar, sifted

225g/8oz white chocolate, chopped

25g/1oz plain chocolate, chopped

1 Mix together the ground almonds and sugars in a bowl.
2 Place the white chocolate in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir gently until melted.
3 Remove bowl from pan, and stir in almond mixture.
4 When the mixture is firm enough to handle, shape into 30 small balls, and flatten slightly to make buttons.
5 Mark a criss-cross pattern on each button with a knife, and leave to set on waxed paper.
6 Melt the plain chocolate as in step 2, and pipe a chocolate letter onto each button.

Top: *Chocolate Crunch Animals.* ***Bottom right:*** *Buttons.*

BIRTHDAY

3 STRICTLY ADULT

Make these chocolates after the children have gone to bed! They all contain spirits or liqueurs, so open the cocktail cabinet, or experiment with even more flavours by buying a selection of miniatures. They are delicious at any time of the day, but are perfect for handing around after dinner.

Highball Cups

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 10

100g/4oz fudge (recipe on page 6)

2×5ml sp/2tsp whisky

2×5ml sp/2tsp chopped stem ginger

10 plain chocolate cups (see page 36)

TO DECORATE
a little plain chocolate, melted

stem ginger

1 Place the fudge in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir until melted.
2 Remove the bowl from the pan, and stir in the whisky. Cool slightly.
3 Divide the stem ginger between the chocolate cups and spoon the fudge into each one. Leave to set.
4 Pipe a little melted chocolate onto each cup, and decorate with small pieces of chopped stem ginger.

Highball Cups

HINTS AND TIPS

Keeping Home-made Chocolates

The appearance of home-made chocolates will deteriorate much more quickly than their flavour. Those containing a high proportion of cream or soft cheese should be kept well wrapped and refrigerated and eaten with 7-10 days.

Rum & Hazelnut Truffles

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 20

100g/4oz plain chocolate, chopped
25g/1oz unsalted butter, diced
50g/2oz hazelnuts, toasted and chopped
50g/2oz icing sugar, sifted
1 egg yolk, beaten
1×15ml sp/1tbsp dark rum
1×5ml sp/1tsp cream

TO COAT
25g/1oz each of plain and white chocolate, grated

1 Place the chocolate and butter in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
2 Remove the bowl from the pan, and stir in all of the remaining ingredients. Refrigerate until firm enough to handle.
3 Form the mixture into small balls, and roll half in plain grated chocolate, and half in white grated chocolate, to coat.

Bed-time Truffles

PREPARATION TIME: *30 minutes*

Makes 24

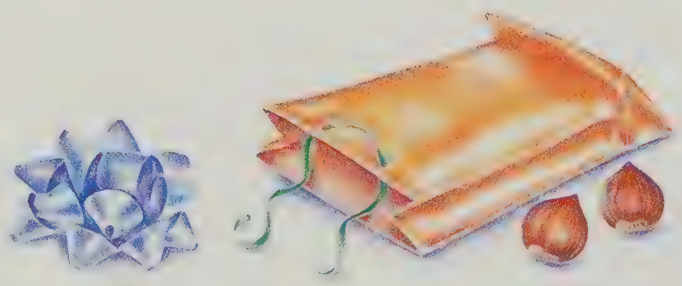
125ml/4fl oz double cream
50g/2oz unsalted butter, diced
225g/8oz plain chocolate, finely chopped
3×15ml sp/3tbsp malted drink powder
2×15ml sp/2tbsp brandy

TO COAT
2×15ml sp/2tbsp malted drink powder

1 Rinse a saucepan with cold water, and measure in the cream and butter.
2 Warm gently to melt the butter, and heat until bubbling.
3 Remove pan from heat, add the chocolate, and stir until melted.
4 Stir in the malted drink and brandy, transfer to a bowl, and refrigerate until firm enough to handle.
5 Form the mixture into small balls, and roll in malted drink to coat.

HINTS AND TIPS

Harder sweets such as caramels, toffees, coconut ice, fudges and nougat keep better in airtight containers. Separate the layers with non-stick or waxed paper.



Top: *Rum & Hazelnut Truffles.*
Bottom: *Bed-time Truffles.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Freezing Chocolate
Chocolate can be stored for much longer periods in the freezer, provided it is tightly wrapped. Leave it to thaw completely before unwrapping, to prevent moisture condensing on the surface and spoiling the appearance.

White Lady Cocktails

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 24

50ml/2fl oz double cream
2×5ml sp/2tsp liquid glucose
75g/3oz white chocolate, finely chopped
1½×5ml sp/1½tsp gin
1½×5ml sp/1½tsp Cointreau
a few drops of lemon juice
115g/4½oz icing sugar, sifted

TO DECORATE
crystallized lemon slices

1 Rinse a saucepan with cold water, and measure in the cream and glucose. Heat gently until bubbling.
2 Remove pan from heat, add the chocolate, and stir until melted.
3 Add the gin, Cointreau and lemon juice, and gradually stir in the icing sugar. Refrigerate until fairly firm.
4 Transfer the mixture to a piping bag with a star nozzle, and pipe the cocktails into paper cases.
5 Decorate and return to the refrigerator.

Brandied Nougat Slice

PREPARATION TIME: *30 minutes*

Makes 900g/2lb

400g/14oz granulated sugar
125ml/4fl oz water
175g/6oz clear honey
2 egg whites
75g/3oz plain chocolate, melted
350g/12oz mixed sultanas, raisins and chopped glâcé cherries, soaked overnight in 2×15ml sp/2tbsp brandy
2 sheets rice paper

1 Place the sugar and water in a saucepan, and heat gently, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil, without stirring, and boil steadily to the hard crack stage, 150°C/300°F.
3 Meanwhile, place the clear honey in a bowl over a pan of hot water, and heat gradually to 49°C/120°F.
4 Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl until very stiff, and gradually whisk in the sugar syrup. Whisk in the honey in the same way.
5 Place the bowl over a saucepan of hot water, and whisk until the mixture is very thick and firm.
6 Remove the bowl from the pan, stir in the melted chocolate, and fold in the soaked mixed fruit.
7 Turn into a 20cm/8in square tin lined with rice paper, and cover mixture with more rice paper.
8 Place a thick piece of card on top of the nougat, weight down, and leave overnight.
9 Turn out and cut into slices.

HIN AN TIPS

Chocolate can also be kept in the refrigerator on very hot days, if it is allowed to reach room temperature before unwrapping, again to stop condensation.

Top: *White Lady Cocktails.*
Bottom: *Brandied Nougat Slice.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Chocolate Moulds

Use plastic chocolate moulds for unusual shapes and chocolates with a professional appearance. Moulds should be clean and dry with no scratches to give chocolates a sheen. Spoon in some melted chocolate, and tip the mould to coat it evenly. Pour off the excess and dry upside down on non-stick paper. The chocolate will contract slightly on cooling, and gentle tapping should remove it from the mould. Fill chocolates with centres before removing from their moulds for best results.

Coffee Wedges

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 24

150g/5oz plain chocolate, chopped
50g/2oz unsalted butter, diced
1×15ml sp/1tbsp coffee granules
1 egg yolk, beaten
1×15ml sp/1tbsp Tia Maria
25g/1oz icing sugar, sifted
25g/1oz ground almonds

1 Place the chocolate, butter and coffee in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
2 Remove bowl from pan, and stir the egg yolk and Tia Maria into the chocolate.
3 Add the sugar and almonds, and refrigerate until just firm.
4 Shape the mixture into small 'cakes', return to the refrigerator until set, and cut into wedges.

Pina Colada Fondants

PREPARATION TIME: *45 minutes*

Makes 10-14 depending on mould size

40g/1½oz plain chocolate, chopped
50g/2oz fondant (recipe on page 10)
2×5ml sp/2tsp desiccated coconut
1½×5ml sp/1½tsp white rum
10-14 small pieces of crystallized pineapple

1 Melt the chocolate in a small bowl over a pan of hot water.
2 Use the chocolate to make moulded cases, following the instructions above left.
3 Place the fondant in another bowl over hot water, and stir until melted.
4 Remove bowl from pan, and stir in the coconut and rum. Leave to cool.
5 Place a piece of pineapple in each chocolate mould, spoon over the fondant, and seal in with melted chocolate.

Cherry Liqueurs

PREPARATION TIME: *30 minutes*

Makes 12

4×15ml sp/4tbsp double cream
50g/2oz plain chocolate, finely chopped
2½×15ml sp/2½tbsp Morello cherry conserve
2×5ml sp/2tsp Kirsch
12 white chocolate cups (see page 36)
TO DECORATE
a little white chocolate, melted

1 Rinse a small saucepan with cold water, and measure in the cream. Heat gently until bubbling.
2 Remove pan from heat, add the chocolate, and stir until melted. Leave to cool slightly.
3 Mix together the conserve and Kirsch, and divide between the chocolate cups. Spoon over the chocolate mixture, and leave to set.
4 Decorate the tops of the liqueurs with melted white chocolate.

Top right: *Coffee Wedges.* ***Bottom left:*** *Pina Colada Fondants.* ***Bottom right:*** *Cherry Liqueurs.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Chocolate Cups

These are made with small foil or paper sweet cases. If using paper use two cases for extra strength. Spoon melted chocolate into the cases and tip to coat evenly. Pour off excess chocolate, leave to set, and apply a second coat if wished. Fill the cups with appropriate centres. A piping bag will help with softer centres, and either leave open, spoon chocolate over the top, or make lids to cover very soft and liquid centres.

Cassis Diamonds

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 24

50g/2oz cream cheese
7g/¼oz unsalted butter
1×15ml sp/1tbsp Cassis
350g/12oz icing sugar, sifted
225g/8oz milk chocolate, chopped
15g/½oz plain chocolate, chopped

1 Beat together the cream cheese, butter and Cassis.
2 Gradually beat in the icing sugar to make a very stiff mixture, and knead lightly.
3 Shape the mixture into a 15cm/6in square on waxed paper, and refrigerate.
4 Place the milk and plain chocolate, in separate bowls, over pans of hot water, stirring occasionally until melted.
5 Remove bowls from pans, and spread the milk chocolate over the Cassis square.
6 Pipe or spoon the plain chocolate in lines over the milk chocolate, and pull a skewer through to form a pattern.
7 Leave to set, and cut into diamonds.

Rusty Nail Creams

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 18

50ml/2fl oz double cream
2×5ml sp/2tsp liquid glucose
40g/1½oz plain chocolate, finely chopped
1½×5ml sp/1½tsp whisky
1½×5ml sp/1½tsp Drambuie
175g/6oz icing sugar, sifted
TO DECORATE
a little plain chocolate, melted

1 Rinse a saucepan with cold water, and measure in the cream and glucose. Heat gently until bubbling.
2 Remove the pan from the heat, add the chocolate, and stir until melted.
3 Add the whisky and Drambuie, and gradually stir in the icing sugar. Refrigerate until fairly firm.
4 Transfer the mixture to a piping bag with a star nozzle, and pipe the creams onto waxed paper.
5 Top each cream with a little melted chocolate, and return to the refrigerator until set.

Top left: *Cassis Diamonds.*
Bottom right: *Rusty Nail Creams.*

4
FOR ALL OCCASIONS

This chapter takes you through the year, from Christmas right up to Bonfire Night. With a little decoration and care, they will make delightful presents for those special seasonal occasions.

Icy Christmas Puddings

PREPARATION TIME: *1 hour*

Makes 30

150ml/¼ pint milk

40g/1½oz plain chocolate, finely chopped

2 egg yolks, size 5-6

40g/1½oz caster sugar

75g/3oz praline, finely crushed (recipe page 14)

150ml/¼ pint double cream, whipped

TO COAT

275g/10oz plain chocolate, melted and cooled

TO DECORATE

100g/4oz marzipan (recipe page 8)

food colourings

1 Place the milk and chocolate in a small saucepan, and heat gently to melt the chocolate and warm the milk.
2 Beat together the egg yolks and sugar, and beat in the chocolate milk.
3 Strain the custard back into the saucepan, and heat very gently, stirring until slightly thickened. Add the praline.
4 Pour the hot custard into a freezer-proof container, cool, and then freeze for 2-3 hours until slushy.
5 Beat the ice-cream thoroughly and fold in the cream.
6 Freeze for a further 2 hours, and beat again. Leave to freeze completely.
7 Meanwhile, roll out the marzipan thinly, and cut out 30 small shapes to top the puddings. Colour the remaining scraps of marzipan to make holly leaves and berries.
8 When the ice-cream has frozen, scoop out small balls with a melon baller, quickly coat with chocolate, and top with the marzipan 'cream', leaves and berries. Return to the freezer until required.

Icy Christmas Puddings

HINTS AND TIPS

Dipping Chocolates

Sweets that are to be dipped or coated in chocolate should be left to dry for a while before dipping, so make your centres well in advance. Recipes state the quantity of chocolate required to cover certain sweets, but it is easier to melt a little extra to give plenty of depth for dipping. Melt the chocolate as on page 24 and leave to cool and thicken slightly. Dip your centre into the chocolate on a fork, turn over to coat, and lift out on the prongs. Tap to remove excess chocolate and draw the fork over the edge of the bowl to stop drips. Dry the chocolates on non-stick or waxed paper.

Chestnut Logs

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 24

175g/6oz milk chocolate, chopped
100g/4oz unsweetened chestnut purée
1×15ml sp/1tbsp dark rum
1 egg, separated
TO DECORATE
a little milk chocolate, melted

1 Place the chocolate in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted. Remove bowl from pan.
2 Beat the chestnut purée until smooth, or process in a blender or food processor. Add the rum and egg yolk, and beat in the melted chocolate.
3 Whisk the egg white until fairly stiff, fold into the chocolate mixture, and refrigerate until fairly firm.
4 Transfer the mixture to a piping bag with a star nozzle, and pipe logs, approximately 4cm/1½in long, onto waxed paper.
5 Sprinkle logs with melted chocolate, and refrigerate until set. Eat within 1-2 days.

Spiced Crackers

PREPARATION TIME: *30 minutes*

Makes 30

100g/4oz ground almonds
50g/2oz caster sugar
50g/2oz icing sugar, sifted
2×5ml sp/2tsp mixed spice
finely grated rind of 1 small orange
finely grated rind of 1 small lemon
2×5ml sp/2tsp orange juice
2×5ml sp/2tsp lemon juice
approximately ½ an egg yolk
TO COAT
100g/4oz chocolate, melted — use plain, milk and white chocolate for variety if wished

1 Mix together the ground almonds, sugars and spice.
2 Stir in the rind and juice, and enough egg yolk to bind the mixture.
3 Shape into 30 crackers, and leave to dry well before coating with chocolate.
4 Wrap in coloured sweet papers when set.

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Other Coatings
Chocolate flavoured coatings are made from vegetable fats or oils, sugar and cocoa powder, and although they are easy to handle they have a completely different flavour, and do not make good quality chocolates.

Ginger Bells

PREPARATION TIME: *40 minutes*

Makes 18 depending on mould size

175g/6oz chocolate, chopped — use plain, white or milk for variety

75g/3oz caster sugar

25g/1oz glucose powder

15g/½oz gelatine

65ml/2½fl oz apple juice

1×15ml sp/1tbsp stem ginger syrup

25g/1oz stem ginger, finely chopped

1 Melt the chocolate as in step 1 of Chestnut Logs, and use to make bells in chocolate moulds, following instructions on page 34.
2 Mix together the sugar, glucose powder and gelatine in a small saucepan, stir in the apple juice and ginger syrup, and heat gently to dissolve. Leave to cool.
3 Divide the stem ginger between the bells, pour in the apple and ginger jelly, and leave to set until firm.
4 Fix the bell halves together to finish or seal the jelly in with melted chocolate. Eat within a few days.

Top: *Chesnut Logs.*
Right: *Spiced Crackers.*
Bottom left: *Ginger Bells.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Decorating

Dipped chocolates can be decorated with the dipping fork while still wet, by using the prongs to make ridges in the chocolate. Decorate other chocolates by piping lines or patterns on top in a contrasting colour, or by swirling the two colours together. Use crystallized flowers, small nuts or candied fruits on top to indicate the flavour of the centre, or pipe initials on individual chocolates to make up a special greeting or message in a box.

St. Valentine's Casket

PREPARATION TIME: *45 minutes*

Makes 1 casket

HEARTS
100g/4oz caster sugar
125ml/4fl oz water
½×5ml sp/½tsp peppermint essence
225g/8oz milk chocolate, chopped

CASKET
75g/3oz plain chocolate, chopped

TO DECORATE
flowers and ribbons

1 Place the sugar and water in a saucepan, and heat gently, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil, without stirring, until light golden in colour.
3 Add the peppermint essence, and pour the syrup onto a lightly oiled baking sheet. Leave to set, then crush finely.
4 Place the milk chocolate in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
5 Remove bowl from pan, stir in the crushed mint caramel, and spread into a 25cm/10in square on waxed paper. Leave to set.
6 Meanwhile, make the casket. Melt the plain chocolate as in step 4, cool slightly, and spread into a 20cm/8in square on waxed paper. Leave to set.
7 Cut out 2 hexagonals approx 10cm/4in from point to point, and 6 sides for the casket. Melt the scraps of chocolate, and brush a little onto the edges of the base and sides, to assemble.
8 Using a cutter, cut out heart shapes from the chocolate mint squares. Melt the scraps for extra hearts if wished.
9 Fill the casket with hearts and flowers, attach the lid, and decorate with ribbons.

Mother's Day Chocolate Boxes

PREPARATION TIME: *50 minutes*

Makes 6

BOXES
75g/3oz plain chocolate, chopped

FILLING
100g/4oz milk chocolate, chopped
32g/1¼oz unsalted butter, diced
2×5ml sp/2tsp Curaçao
1×5ml sp/1tsp beaten egg yolk
25g/1oz icing sugar, sifted

TO DECORATE
crystallized or sugar flowers, angelica and ribbons

1 Place the plain chocolate in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted. Remove bowl from pan, and leave to cool slightly.
2 Spread the chocolate onto a baking sheet lined with waxed paper, to a 20cm/8in square. Leave to set.
3 With a sharp knife, cut out 36×2.5cm/1in squares from the chocolate.
4 Melt the remaining scraps of chocolate as in step 1, and brush a little onto the edges of 30 of the squares to assemble 6 boxes. Reserve 6 squares for lids.
5 To make the filling, melt together the milk chocolate and butter, as in step 1, stir in the Curaçao and egg yolk, and gradually add the icing sugar. Refrigerate until fairly firm.
6 Transfer the filling to a piping bag with a star nozzle, and pipe the mixture into the chocolate boxes. Attach the lids.
7 Decorate, and leave to set.

Left: *St Valentine's Casket.*
Right: *Mother's Day Chocolate Boxes.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Easter Egg Tips

Easter eggs can be made with plain, milk or white chocolate, although plain is preferable, as it is easier to work with and sets harder, making the eggs less likely to crack. Fill large eggs with chocolates or other sweets, before fixing halves together, or add a soft filling to smaller eggs while they are in their moulds. Pipe chocolate or icing around the edges of eggs, and decorate with crystallized flowers, dragées and ribbons for the finishing touch.

Easter Egg

PREPARATION TIME: *15 minutes*

Makes 1

200g/7oz chocolate for 1×18cm/7in high egg

225g/8oz chocolate for 2-3×10cm/4in eggs

450g/1lb chocolate for 1×20cm/8in egg

1 Chop the chocolate and place in a small bowl over a pan of hot water. Stir occasionally until melted.
2 Remove the bowl from the pan, and spoon a little of the chocolate into a clean and dry Easter egg mould.
3 Tilt the mould until it is evenly coated, and pour any excess chocolate back into the bowl.
4 Place the mould upside down on waxed paper, and leave to set. Add another 1-2 coats of chocolate in the same way if using large moulds.
5 Cut off any excess chocolate from the edge of the mould, and ease the egg out.
6 Paint the edge of one half of each egg with a little melted chocolate, and gently press the two halves together, holding with greaseproof paper. Leave to set.

Easter Nests

PREPARATION TIME: *15 minutes*
COOKING TIME: *45 minutes*
OVEN SETTING: *140°C/275°F/Gas 1.*

Makes 4

1 egg white

75g/3oz caster sugar

25g/1oz cornflour, sifted

50g/2oz plain chocolate, grated

TO FILL

small chocolate eggs (make in small moulds, following instructions below and on page 34)

1 Whisk the egg white until stiff.
2 Gradually whisk in half of the sugar, and fold in the remainder with the cornflour and chocolate.
3 Transfer the meringue to a piping bag with a large star nozzle, and pipe 6.5cm/2½in nests onto a baking sheet lined with non-stick silicone paper.
4 Bake in a preheated oven at 140°C/275°F/Gas 1 for 45 minutes, until dry.
5 Leave to cool, and fill with small chocolate eggs and sugar eggs.

Top and right: *Easter Egg.*
Bottom left: *Easter Nests.*

HINTS AND TIPS

Extra Advice

■ *Warm spoons in hot water before measuring out thick syrups, honey or liquid glucose. These ingredients will then slide off the spoon and none will be wasted.*

Coconut Bonfires

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 12

225g/8oz milk chocolate, chopped

25g/1oz unsalted butter, diced

1½×15ml sp/1½tbsp coffee powder

225g/8oz coconut ice (recipe on page 8), crushed

TO DECORATE
20g/⅘oz each of grated white and milk chocolate

12 jelly diamonds

1 Place the chocolate, butter and coffee powder in a bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
2 Remove the bowl from the pan, stir in the coconut ice, and leave the mixture to cool and thicken slightly.
3 Mould or spoon the mixture into 12 mounds on waxed paper.
4 Sprinkle each bonfire with grated chocolate, and top with a jelly diamond.

Halloween Cats

PREPARATION TIME: *30 minutes*

Makes 12

100g/4oz toffee (recipe on page 12), broken up

75g/3oz milk chocolate, chopped

2×15ml sp/2tbsp maple syrup

25g/1oz shelled pistachio nuts, finely chopped

TO DECORATE
liquorice strands and coloured dragées

1 Place the toffee, chocolate and syrup in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
2 Remove the bowl from the pan, stir in the nuts, and leave to cool and thicken slightly.
3 When the toffee mixture will just hold its shape, spoon 12 rounds onto an oiled baking sheet.
4 Decorate with liquorice and dragées for the cats' eyes, ears and whiskers, and leave to harden.

HINTS AND TIPS

Oil a knife before marking squares in toffee, caramel, etc., in order to stop the mixture sticking to the knife.

Top left: *Coconut Bonfires.*
Bottom: *Halloween Cats.*

5 WHOLEFOOD SHOP

Chocolates that are a little less naughty! Just in case you feel guilty after trying the others, here are some recipes with those 'healthy' ingredients such as muesli, fruit, nuts and yoghurt. If you want to be extra good, substitute carob for any chocolate used.

Nutty Butterscotch Rounds

PREPARATION TIME: *30 minutes*

Makes 12

225g/8oz light muscovado sugar

65ml/2½fl oz water

40g/1½oz unsalted butter, diced

15g/½oz each of shelled pecan nuts, pine kernels and pumpkin seeds

25g/1oz carob, chopped

1 Place the sugar and water in a saucepan, and heat gently, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil, without stirring, and boil steadily to the soft crack stage, 141°C/280°F on a sugar thermometer.
3 Remove immediately from the heat, gradually add the butter, and leave until just starting to thicken.
4 Quickly spoon into fairly flat rounds on an oiled baking sheet, and sprinkle with the nuts and seeds. Leave to set.
5 Place the carob in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted. Remove bowl from pan, pour carob over butterscotch rounds, and leave again to harden.

Nutty Butterscotch Rounds

HINTS AND TIPS

Chocolate Shapes
Although the most professional shapes can be made with special moulds, you can also make many with a small selection of cutters and a sharp knife.

Muesli Triangles

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 24

450g/1lb light muscovado sugar
150ml/¼ pint semi-skimmed milk
100g/4oz muesli
25g/1oz carob powder

1 Place the sugar and milk in a saucepan, and heat gently, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil, without stirring, and boil steadily to the soft ball stage, 116°C/240°F on a sugar thermometer.
3 Remove immediately from the heat, stir in the muesli and carob powder, and quickly turn into a shallow 18cm/7in oiled square tin.
4 Mark into triangles as the mixture sets, and cut up when completely set.

Orange & Ginger Soft Cheese Fudge

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 36

350g/12oz plain chocolate, chopped
75g/3oz low-fat soft cheese
275g/10oz icing sugar, sifted
1 satsuma, peeled and chopped
50g/2oz crystallized ginger, chopped
TO DECORATE
small pieces of satsuma and crystallized ginger

1 Place the chocolate in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
2 Gradually beat the melted chocolate into the soft cheese, and add the icing sugar a little at a time.
3 Stir the satsuma and ginger into the fudge, and spoon into a shallow 4×3¾cm/10×8in tin lined with waxed paper. Refrigerate until firm.
4 Cut out shapes or squares of fudge, and decorate with satsuma and ginger pieces. Keep refrigerated and eat within 7 days.

HINTS AND TIPS

For a change from squares, cut out triangles, diamonds, bars, wedges and half moons. Moulded sweets can be formed into rolls or twists, and cutters can be used to make stars, flower shapes and drops. Unusual shapes will complement each other well in a selection box.

Peach Melba Chocolates

PREPARATION TIME: *50 minutes*

Makes 30
depending on mould size

75g/3oz plain chocolate, chopped
50g/2oz white chocolate, chopped
4×15ml sp/4tbsp set natural yoghurt
25g/1oz raspberries, mashed
½ small peach, finely chopped

1 Place the plain chocolate in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
2 Use the chocolate to make moulded cases following the instructions on page 34.
3 Melt the white chocolate as in step 1, and beat in the yoghurt and raspberries.
4 Divide the chopped peach between the chocolate moulds, spoon in the yoghurt mixture, and seal with melted chocolate.

Top: *Muesli Triangles.*
Bottom right: *Orange & Ginger Soft Cheese Fudge.*
Bottom left: *Peach Melba Chocolates.*

Honeycomb Chunks

PREPARATION TIME: *25 minutes*

Makes 36 pieces

450g/1lb light muscavodo sugar

300ml/½pt water

4×15ml sp/4tbsp vinegar

3×15ml sp/3tbsp golden syrup

1½×5ml sp/1½tsp cinnamon

½×5ml sp/½ tsp smoothed bicarbonate of soda

225g/8oz carob, chopped

1 Place the sugar, water, vinegar and syrup in a saucepan, and heat gently, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved completely.
2 Bring to the boil, without stirring, and boil steadily to the soft crack stage, 141°C/285°F on a sugar thermometer.
3 Remove immediately from the heat, stir in the cinnamon and bicarbonate of soda, and allow the bubbles to subside a little before pouring into a 20cm/8in lightly oiled square tin.
4 Leave to set slightly, mark into squares, and allow to set completely.
5 Place the carob in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted. Remove bowl from pan.
6 Break up the honeycomb and dip the pieces in the carob to coat. Leave to set.

Top: Honeycomb Chunks.
Bottom right: *Honeyed Fruit Bars.*

Honeyed Fruit Bars

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 18

100g/4oz no-need-to-soak dried apricots

75g/3oz dried pears

40g/1½oz low-fat soft cheese

4×15ml sp/4tbsp carob powder

1½×15ml sp/1½tbsp clear honey

1 Finely mince or process the dried fruit.
2 Beat the soft cheese until smooth, and beat in the carob powder and honey.
3 Stir just under half of the fruit into the cheese mixture, and press half of this mixture into a 10cm/4in square on waxed paper or an oiled baking sheet.
4 Cover the square with the remaining dried fruit, and press the second half of the cheese mixture on top.
5 Wrap the square in waxed paper and refrigerate until firm. Cut into bars.

HINTS AND TIPS

Carob

Carob is not a type of chocolate, but it can be used in much the same way. It is made from the husks of the fruit of the carob tree, and does taste slightly like chocolate, but has the advantages of being free from caffeine and oxalic acid. Melt it in the same way as chocolate, and although it does not give a particularly glossy finish for coating sweets, it can be substituted for chocolate in many recipes.

HINTS AND TIPS

Nutritious Chocolate

Chocolate contains many valuable nutrients, and is most useful in supplying the body with energy quickly. Surprisingly enough it also contains protein, calcium, iron, phosphates and vitamin A, as well as carbohydrate and vegetable oils or fats. It is also easily digestible.

Tropical Delights

PREPARATION TIME: *20 minutes*

Makes 25

175g/6oz clear honey

150g/5oz golden syrup

75g/3oz unsalted butter, diced

100g/4oz Tropical dried fruit mix, roughly chopped

100g/4oz plain chocolate or carob, chopped

TO DECORATE
a little extra Tropical mix

1 Place the honey, syrup and butter in a saucepan, and heat gently, stirring occasionally until the butter has melted.
2 Bring to the boil, and boil steadily to the hard ball stage, 130°C/250°F.
3 Remove immediately from the heat, stir in the Tropical mix, and pour into an oiled, shallow, 18cm/7in square tin.
4 Place the chocolate or carob in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
5 Pour the chocolate into the tin to cover the Tropical Delights, and decorate with Tropical mix.
6 Mark into squares when starting to set, and leave to set completely.

Dark Carob Truffles

PREPARATION TIME: *30 minutes*

Makes 20

100g/4oz fruit cake crumbs (wholemeal if possible)

2×15ml sp/2tbsp orange juice

100g/4oz carob, chopped

50g/2oz polyunsaturated margarine

115g/4½oz light muscovado sugar

50g/2oz blanched almonds, finely chopped

TO COAT AND DECORATE
2×5ml sp/2tsp carob powder

2×15ml sp/2tbsp ground almonds, and a few chopped almonds

1 Place the cake crumbs in a bowl, and sprinkle over the orange juice.
2 Place the carob and margarine in a small bowl over a pan of hot water, and stir occasionally until melted.
3 Remove bowl from pan, and gradually stir in the sugar.
4 Add the cake crumbs and almonds to the carob mixture, mix thoroughly, and leave until firm enough to handle.
5 Mould the mixture into small balls, roll half in the carob powder and half in ground almonds, and top with chopped almonds.
6 Leave to set.

Top: *Tropical Delights.*
Bottom: *Dark Carob Truffles.*

INDEX

A

Animals, *chocolate crunch* 26

B

Bed-time truffles 30
Bells, *ginger* 41
Bonfires, *coconut* 46
Bow ties 18
Boxes, *Mother's Day* 42
Brandied nougat slice 32
Butterscotch 14
  nutty butterscoth rounds 48
Buttons 26

C

Caramels, *cream* 12
Carob 52
  dark carob truffles 54
Cassis diamonds 36
Cats, *Halloween* 46
Cherry liqueurs 34
Chestnut logs 40
Chocolate crunch animals 26
Christmas puddings, *icy* 38
Chunks, *honeycomb* 52
Coconut: *bonfires* 46
  cups 22
  ice 8
Coffee wedges 34
Cornets, *peanut butter* 20
Crackers, *spiced* 40
Cream caramels 12
Cups, *chocolate* 16

D

Dark carob truffles 54
Decorating 42
Dipping 40

E

Easter egg 44
Easter nests 44
Equipment 5

F

Fondant 10
  piña colada 34
Footballs 22
Fruit bars, *honeyed* 52
Fudge 6
  orange and ginger soft cheese 50
Fudgie stars 24

G

Ginger: *bells* 41
  orange and ginger soft cheese fudge 50

H

Halloween cats 46
Hazelnut: *rum and hazelnut truffles* 30
Highball cups 28
Honeycomb chunks 52
Honeyed fruit bars 52

I

Icy Christmas puddings 38

L

Liqueurs, *cherry* 34
Logs, *chestnut* 40
Lollipops, *rocky road* 20

M

Mallow moons 24
Marzipan 8
Melting chocolate 24
Mother's Day chocolate boxes 42
Moulds 34
Muesli triangles 50

N

Nests, *Easter* 44
Nougat 16
  brandied nougat slice 32
Nutty butterscotch rounds 48

O

Orange and ginger soft cheese fudge 50

P

Packing 5
Peach melba chocolate 51
Peanut butter cornets 20
Piña colada fondants 34
Praline 14

Q

Quick uncooked fondat 10

R

Rainbow twists 22
Rocky road lollipops 20
Rum and hazelnut truffles 30
Rusty nail cream 36

S

St Valentine's casket 42
Spiced crackers 40
Stars, *fudgie* 24
Storing chocolate 26
Sugur syrups 12, 14

T

Toffee 12
Triangles, *muesli* 50
Tropical delights 54
Truffles, *bed-time* 30
  dark carob 54
  rum and hazelnut 30
Turkish delight 16

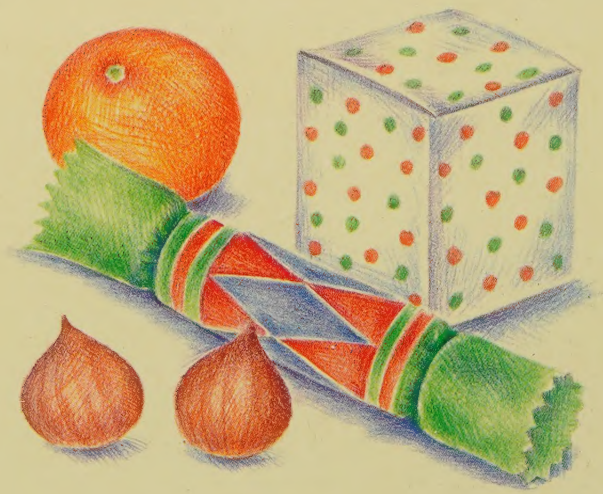
W

White lady cocktails 32

Chocolates

The Asda book of Chocolates is an invaluable source of recipes and hints for all chocolate lovers. Choose from simple chocolates for children to make, seasonal recipes, liqueurs, and even wholefood chocolate for the 'health' conscious. It includes recipes for delicious centres and basic tips on melting, moulding and keeping chocolate to give your home-made product that professional touch.

Valerie Eames is a qualified freelance Home Economist specialising in recipe and product development and preparing food for photography. Valerie was previously a Home Economist for two of Britain's leading food retailers.



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